

# CONNECTICUT CRUISE SHIP TASK FORCE INC

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11 March 2008

**Re: Raised Bill No. 550**

## **AN ACT APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR THE CONNECTICUT CRUISE SHIP TASK FORCE**

Dear Members of the Commerce Committee,

I am here representing our Board of Trustees and also our many, many volunteers, to support Raised Bill No. 550.

We began our operation by bringing the first cruise ship to Connecticut's Port of New London in September 2002. Since then we have brought many cruise ships representing five cruise lines and thousands of money-spending passengers into our state.

In 2007 we were responsible for bringing in over 22,000 passengers and crew to the state, the third largest cruise ship in the world and a record number of port-calls (7) that resulted in an estimated 1.3 million dollar influx of money into our state's economy.

We need funds to continue operating and Raised Bill No. 550 will go a very long way in allowing us to continue this operation. Recently Governor Rell said, "*Not only do those (cruise ship) passengers benefit our economy while they are here, they also get a taste of Connecticut to take back home. That can drive return visits and 'word-of-mouth' buzz about the many great attractions of our state. This is an advantage we cannot afford to lose*".

We have arranged for eight cruise ship visits (so far) for 2008. A new cruise line, Princes Cruises, will bring their beautiful, new cruise ship, *m/s Royal Princess* here five times beginning in September. The Royal Caribbean Cruise Line mega-ship, *m/s Explorer of the Seas*, will make the first time-ever port calls in the summer months on July 4<sup>th</sup> and August 1<sup>st</sup>. Holland America Line kicks off our 2008 cruise ship season on May 8<sup>th</sup>. Our season sees the last port-call happen very late in the year on November 6<sup>th</sup>.

I cannot tell you just how important this \$100,000.00 is to the Connecticut Cruise Ship Task Force and to the State of Connecticut, except to say that it will be our life-line.

Fair Winds,



George A. Cassidy  
Executive Director